

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 764 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

INFO MUSCAT TEHRAN JANUARY 17TH:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 764

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MARR, MASS, SOPN, XF, .MU, IR, US

SUBJECT: REPORT OF INCREASED U.S. PRESENCE IN OMAN

1. BRITISH JOURNALIST CURRENTLY IN BEIRUT, BUT PLANNING TRAVEL TO OMAN IN NEAR FUTURE, HAS ASKED MISSION ABOUT STORY HE HAS PICKED UP FROM PUBLISHER OF "ARAB PRESS SERVICE BULLETIN", WHO QUOTES "SENIOR DIPLOMATIC SOURCES" (PRESUMABLY ARAB) TO EFFECT THAT U.S. PLANS TO INCREASE ITS PRESENCE IN OMAN AS PART OF GRAND PLAN TO NEUTRALIZE DISTURBINGLY RAPID GROWTH OF IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN GULF.

2. OUTLINE OF OMANI-RELATED PORTION OF STORY IS AS FOLLOWS:
FEW MONTHS AGO, AMBASSADOR WOLLE AND SULTAN QABUS EXCHANGED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN WHICH U.S. PROMISED OMAN POLITICAL SUPPORT AND MILITARY SUPPLIES IN HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST REBELS IN EXCHANGE FOR RIGHT TO USE MASIRA ISLAND. THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WAS CONFIRMED AND AMPLIFIED BY ARMS AGREEMENT SIGNED DURING QABUS' RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON. SULTAN IS DISENCHANTED WITH ARAB STATES IN GENERAL AND KUWAIT AND JORDAN

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IN PARTICULAR AND FEARS THAT IRAN IS INTERESTED NOT IN LENDING

WAR, BUT IN MAINTAINING LEVEL OF CONFLICT ADEQUATE FOR TRAINING PURPOSES. SULTAN IS THUS SEEKING TO TURN TO U.S. AFTER WASHINGTON TALKS, U.S. PLANS TO INCREASE ITS PRESENCE IN OMAN, INITIALLY BY SENDING U.S. ADVISORS AND TRAINERS WITH IRANIAN CONTINGENTS, AND THEN BY ATTACHING SUCH PERSONNEL TO SULTAN'S FORCES THEMSELVES.

3. FYI, ARAB PRESS SERVICE BULLETIN PLANNING TO PUBLISH THIS "SCOOP" IN ITS JANUARY 20 ISSUE.

4. BRITISH JOURNALIST MAKING INQUIRY SEEKS DENIAL, COMMENT, OR CONFIRMATION BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM BEIRUT JANUARY 19 IF POSSIBLE. PLEASE ADVISE.
GODLEY

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